AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES

American Citizens Services Newsletter

U.S. EMBASSY LA PAZ, BOLIVIA DECEMBER 2006

As a service to U.S. citizens in or traveling to Bolivia, we are distributing a monthly American Citizen Services newsletter for U.S. citizens. Through this American Citizens Services newsletter, the Consular Section provides information pertaining to consular procedures, policies, and other topics of general interest to U.S. citizens in Bolivia who have registered with the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit and provided an email address.

If you believe others would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please forward it to them and encourage them to subscribe. To subscribe to our monthly newsletter and receive other updates, please register online by following this link:

https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ or

http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm#registration

If you do not wish to receive this monthly newsletter, or would like to be removed from our email list, please email us at consularlapaz@state.gov or USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com, our Internet email address exclusively for U.S. citizen services.

Table of Contents

<u>Limited Services at U.S. Consular Agency Cochabamba</u> <u>November 30, 2006 – January 2, 2007</u>

U.S Embassy La Paz Consular Section Closing at 3:00PM on Friday, December 8

<u>Limited Services at U.S. Consular Agency Santa Cruz December</u> 22-27, 2006

<u>Change in Hours for American Citizen Services in La Paz</u> <u>Effective January 02, 2007</u>

Direct Deposit for Federal Benefits Payments

October 17 Press Release on Passport Card Proposed Rules

Emergency Photo-Digitized Passports Coming in January

Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program

No More 48-Page Passports

No More Amendments in U.S. Passports – Adding Visa Pages Still Permitted

Emergency Passports

Visa Information Service Effective March 30, 2006

All Non-Immigrant Visa Queries Should Be Made Directly to Visa Information Service Call Center

Hours and Range for Consular Services at U.S. Consular Agencies in Santa Cruz and Cochabamba

Renewing U.S. Drivers Licenses While Outside of the U.S.

Notarial Services – What We Can and Cannot Provide

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

<u>Internet Email Address Exclusively for American Citizen</u> <u>Services</u>

Current Travel Information

Internet-Based Registration System

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

Other Internet Addresses of Interest to U.S. Citizens

LIMITED SERVICES AT U.S. CONSULAR AGENCY COCHABAMBA NOVEMBER 30, 2006 – JANUARY 2, 2007

Due to the absence of the consular agent in Cochabamba from November 30, 2006, to January 2, 2007 that consular agency will offer only limited consular services. Persons applying for passports or Consular Reports of Birth Abroad or seeking notarial services during this timeframe should seek these services at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz or the U.S. consular agency in Santa Cruz. Please note that the consular agent in Santa Cruz will be absent from December 22-27. We regret any inconvenience these absences may cause. For more information on the range and hours of services normally provided at our consular agencies, please see below.

U.S EMBASSY LA PAZ CONSULAR SECTION CLOSING AT 3:00PM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

The Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz on Friday, December 8, will close at 3:00PM, one hour earlier than usual on Fridays, for administrative purposes. U.S. citizens seeking emergency assistance after that time may contact the U.S. Embassy at 216-8000 and ask for the Consular Section Chief. Please see below concerning changes in our regular office hours for American Citizen Services commencing January 03, 2007.

LIMITED SERVICES AT U.S. CONSULAR AGENCY SANTA CRUZ DECEMBER 22 - 27, 2006

Due to the absence of the consular agent in Santa Cruz from December 22 - 27, 2006, that consular agency will offer only limited consular services. Persons applying for passports or Consular Reports of Birth Abroad or seeking notarial services during this timeframe should seek these services at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz. We regret

any inconvenience this may cause. For more information on the range and hours of services normally provided at our consular agencies, please see below.

CHANGES IN HOURS FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES IN LA PAZ EFFECTIVE JANUARY 03, 2007

Effective January 03, 2007, in order to better respond to our customers and provide enhanced consular services the American Citizen Services Unit will be open in the afternoons only Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, from 1:30PM to 5:00PM, Tuesday mornings from 8:30AM to 12:30PM and Fridays from 8:30AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 4:00PM, except U.S. and local holidays. This change will provide the ACS Unit one day per week (Wednesday) to focus on processing applications and other administrative matters. To avoid common impediments to quicker processing (such as incorrectly done photographs and insufficient documents), please first check the requirements of the relevant service at http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm.

Please note that U.S. Treasury checks such as IRS refunds, when those arrive, are now distributed by the consular cashier at Window 5 and not the American Citizen Services Unit window. Effective January 03, 2007, U.S. Treasury check recipients may wish to come on Tuesday or Friday mornings to collect their checks given that most banks, including the Banco Bisa office at the U.S. Embassy, tend to be open in the mornings and close in the early afternoon. Please see below concerning Direct Deposit for Federal Benefits checks.

DIRECT DEPOSIT FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS PAYMENTS

Due to the continuous and foreseeable delays in the delivery of Federal Benefits checks, including Social Security checks, and upcoming changes in the way that the Social Security Administration (SSA) and other federal agencies processes these payments we are pleased to inform you that the SSA has made arrangements to directly deposit your benefits through a JPMorganChase debit bank account if you do not already have a U.S. bank account for such direct deposits. Public Law 104-134 of the (Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996) recommends that all Federal pensions including, Social Security shall be paid through Electronic Funds Transfer/Direct Deposit (EFT/DD). The current delivery method of checks coming through U.S. mail to the Embassy for subsequent

collection at the Embassy or consular agencies has resulted in delayed receipt of these benefits as this mail is taking a month or more to reach the Embassy from the U.S. Furthermore, SSA and other federal agencies have advised that it will stop issuing paper checks in the near future. Therefore it has been decided to implement direct deposit of these benefits using the JPMorganChase Direct Benefit Card MasterCard. Under this program, Federal Benefits will be directly deposited into your account by the fifth of every month. You may use the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) card issued by JPMorganChase to withdraw your funds when and where you want, subject to certain charges by the bank. For more information on this program, please see the JPMorganChase web site, jpmorganchase.com, Treasury Services, Chase Direct Benefit Card. The basic monthly charge for this benefit is \$ 6.00.

Most registered Federal Benefits recipients already have received and activated their ATM cards. Beneficiaries who have not yet registered for direct deposit should directly contact the ACS Unit in La Paz at 216-8297 or USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com to receive the enrollment forms. Please note that once direct deposit takes effect here Federal Benefits checks will no longer be delivered to/through the Embassy or consular agencies. Rather, persons who decline to enroll in the direct deposit program will have any Federal Benefits checks sent directly to their last known overseas address through International Priority Airmail. We anticipate these changes will occur effective with the November benefits. During the enrollment process you will be asked to furnish your physical as well as your mailing address and identification papers. Please bring those with you.

For further information, please directly contact the ACS Unit in La Paz at 216-8297 or USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO INTRODUCE PASSPORT CARD

On October 17, 2006, the Department of State issued the following press release:

To meet the documentary requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), the Department of State, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), today announced and submitted for public comment a federal rule proposing the development of a card-format passport for international travel by U.S.

citizens through land and sea ports of entry between the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

The limited-use passport card will be adjudicated to the same standards as a traditional passport book. The rule published today proposes a wallet-sized card that would cost \$10 for children and \$20 for adults, plus a \$25 execution fee.

To facilitate the frequent travel of those living in U.S. border communities and those traveling on commercial maritime vessels, the Department of State has committed to producing a passport card that incorporates cutting-edge technology. The technology incorporated in the proposed card was designed in coordination with DHS specifically to address the operational needs of land border-crossings. The proposed passport card would use long-range, or vicinity, radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to link the card to a secure U.S. government database containing biographical data and a photograph. The card itself will not contain any personal information, and DHS will implement protections to keep the database secure.

The passport card is the core element of the PASS (People Access Security Service) System announced by Secretaries Rice and Chertoff in January 2006, and will secure and expedite travel to and from the United States.

The proposed rule is available for public viewing and comment at www.regulations.gov. For more information, visit www.dhs.gov or travel.state.gov.

EMERGENCY PHOTO-DIGITIZED PASSPORTS COMING IN JANUARY

In accordance with Department of State instructions to all overseas Embassies and Consulates, we will start issuing Emergency Photo-Digitized Passports (EPDP) by January 31, 2007. We have tentatively scheduled this software installation for Wednesday, January 10, when the American Citizen Services Unit will be closed to the public. These emergency photo-digitized passports will use passport books similar to the e-passports now issued in the U.S., but without the electronic chip and limited to 12 pages. This world-wide change is another measure designed to enhance border security and to facilitate travel.

For more information about the Electronic Passport, please visit the Bureau of Consular Affairs' website at http://travel.state.gov.

THE CHILDREN'S PASSPORT ISSUANCE ALERT PROGRAM

The U.S. Embassy in La Paz is currently assisting several parents who reported that their children had been abducted to or within Bolivia in violation of U.S. custody orders. We therefore wish to ensure that all parents of U.S. citizen children are aware of the Department of State's Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program, which either parent may utilize. The following information is taken from the Department of State Web site, www.travel.state.gov., which contains additional information on child abduction and how to prevent that.

The Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program is a service for the parents and legal guardians of minor children. It enables the Department of State's Office of Children's Issues to notify a parent or court ordered legal guardian, when requested, before issuing a U.S. passport for his or her child. The parent, legal guardian, legal representatives, or the court of competent jurisdiction must submit a written request for entry of a child's name into the program to the Office of Children's Issues.

Passport Issuance to Children Under Age 14

On July 2, 2001, the Department of State began implementation of a new law regarding the passport applications of minor U.S. citizens under the age of 14. A person now applying for a passport for a child under 14 must show that both parents consent to the issuance or that the applying parent has sole authority to obtain the passport. Passport applications made in the U.S. and at consular offices abroad will both be covered by the new law. Exceptions to this requirement may be made in special family circumstances or exigent circumstances necessitating the immediate travel of the child.

Once a passport is issued, its use is not tracked or controlled by the Department of State. There are no exit controls for American citizens leaving the United States. If you believe that your child may be abducted internationally, immediately contact the Office of Children's Issues and inform appropriate law enforcement officials.

Information regarding the issuance of a passport to a minor is available to either parent, regardless of custody rights, as long as the requesting parents' rights have not been terminated. The Department of State's Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program is a program to alert us when an application for a United States passport is made. This is not a program for tracking the use of a passport. This program can

be used to inform a parent or a court when an application for a United States passport is executed on behalf of a child. The alert program generally remains in effect until each child turns 18. It is very important that parents keep us informed in writing of any changes to contact information and legal representation. Failure to notify CA/OCS/CI of a current address may result in a passport issuance for your child without your consent.

Office of Children's Issues

Toll Free Phone from within the U.S.: 1-888-407-4747 (8 a.m. - 8

p.m.)

Phone: (202) 736-9090

Adoption Office Fax: (202) 736-9080 Abduction Office Fax: (202) 736-9133

To contact us by e-mail:

For international parental child abduction and adoption country-specific

information: Ask <u>Cl@state.gov</u>

For Hague adoption implementation information:

AdoptionUSCA@state.gov

Department of State Office of Children's Issues SA-29 2201 C Street, NW U.S. Department of State Washington, DC 20520

NO MORE 48-PAGE PASSPORTS

The Department of State has advised overseas posts that 48-page passport books will no longer be printed. Instead, to meet the approximately 300% increase in demand for U.S. passports worldwide only 24-page passports or, effective by January 31, 2007, 12-page Emergency Photo-Digitized Passports will be printed even as the Department of State continues to implement the electronic passport, which will be available in a 52-page book. U.S. citizens needing additional pages may file that request, free of charge, at the nearest consular office. Please note that visa pages may be added only to current, full validity passports in good condition. For more details, please consult our website,

HTTP://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/SERVIC ES.HTM.

NO MORE AMENDMENTS IN U.S. PASSPORTS – ADDING VISA PAGES STILL PERMITTED

As announced by the Department of State on September 19, 2005 and also conveyed through the Embassy's warden system, effective September 26, 2005, as an additional security enhancement, all U.S. passport offices will no longer amend valid passports. Instead, customers requesting name changes, extension of validity for limited passports, or correction of a printing error will apply for replacement passports. These applications may be submitted at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz or through the U.S. consular agencies in Santa Cruz and/or Cochabamba.

If the change is *within one year after issuance*, customers will submit a U.S. Passport Re-Application Form (DS 5504), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new passport pictures. There will be no charge for routine processing. Please note that this form may be used only for passports to be printed in the U.S. Emergency passport requests must be submitted on form DS-11 or form DS-82; please read and follow the instructions on those forms to ensure that the proper form is used.

If the change is *more than one year after issuance*, customers will need to submit an Application for Passport By Mail (DS-82), together with the passport that needs the change, the documentation required, and new pictures. The cost includes the \$55 application fee and \$12 security surcharge, for a total of \$67 for routine processing. Because minor children are not eligible to use this form, changes in children's passports will need to be submitted using the DS-11 form and paying the related consular fees. Of course, if the requested data change is due to a printing error by Passport Services, there will be no charge.

Those only needing to add visa pages to their non-emergency passports will submit an Application for Additional Visa Pages (DS-4085). This service is always free of charge when routine. Please note that for any passport services for children under age 14, including adding visa pages, the parental consent requirements apply. For more information on these requirements, please consult the Department of State, Consular Affairs, website at www.travel.state.gov or the U.S. Embassy website, http://bolivia.usembassy.gov.

All of these forms are available online at www.travel.state.gov. The Passport Amendment/Validation Form (DS-19), previously used to amend passports, is no longer be valid. For more information on

applying for a U.S. passport, forms, and a wealth of other international travel information, please visit the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs website at www.travel.state.gov.

EMERGENCY PASSPORTS

Emergency passports are issued in cases of genuine emergencies that require urgent travel. Consular agencies may receive such applications but are not authorized to approve the applications or issue passports. Instead, all passport applications including emergency ones must be sent to La Paz for processing, adjudication by the consular officer, printing of approved emergency passport applications and return to the consular agency.

Because of the immediate need for a passport in case of genuine emergencies, the emergency passports have a limited validity of, at most, one year and have a limited number of pages. Emergency passports cannot be extended nor can another emergency passport be issued to replace an emergency passport. Visa pages will not be added to an emergency passport. As soon as possible, the emergency passport should be replaced immediately by applying for a full validity passport and including original evidence of U.S. citizenship and identity if that evidence was not presented with the emergency passport application. The application for a full validity passport to replace the emergency one must be done within one year from the emergency passport's issuance date in order not to incur new application charges.

The Department of State recently began implementing overseas the new Emergency Photo-Digitized Passports (EPDPs). As noted above, all emergency passports will be issued in the EPDP format by January 31, 2007. The EPDP is a twelve-page emergency U.S. passport intended to replace machine readable and other emergency passports that are currently issued. The EPDP is not an E-passport and has no circuitry in it, although the page designs are based on those used in the new E-passport.

Regular passports are normally received within 15 calendar days after the U.S. Embassy receives the application then forwarded via courier to the nearest Consular Agency (Cochabamba and Santa Cruz) or kept at the American Citizen Services office in La Paz for collection. More information may be found at

http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm

VISA INFORMATION SERVICE EFFECTIVE MARCH 30

On March 30, 2006, the U.S. Mission in Bolivia commenced a new visa information service. Persons seeking information on U.S. visa services and requirements, including scheduling a visa appointment, must use this service. This requirement also applies to U.S. citizens inquiring on behalf of their non-U.S. citizen family members or others wishing to travel to the U.S. Case-specific queries, such as why a particular visa was refused, should still be directed to the U.S. Embassy Consular Section at CONSULARLAPAZ@STATE.GOV For further details on the new Visa Information Service, please consult our Web site at HTTP://LAPAZ.USEMBASSY.GOV/ENGLISH/CONSULAR/NIV/NIVISASERV.HTM. As noted in the Consular Information Sheet, U.S. citizens seeking information on Bolivian visa services and requirements should consult the Bolivian Immigration Web site at HTTP://www.migracion.gov.bo (please note that the Web site is in Spanish).

ALL NON-IMMIGRANT VISA QUERIES SHOULD BE MADE DIRECTLY TO VISA INFORMATION SERVICE CALL CENTER

Any and all requests for non-immigrant visa (i.e. visas for tourism or other short trips to the United States) information/guidance/advice or other non-immigrant visa queries must be directed to the Visa Information Service Call Center described above or, if case-specific, to the Visa Unit at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz at consularlapaz@state.gov. We have received several complaints from consular agency customers that they received incorrect visa information. Please note that we have instructed the consular agencies since August 2005 to refer all visa queries directly to the visa unit at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz and, since the Visa Information Services Call Center commenced operations on March 30, 2006, to that Call Center. The consular agencies have posters outside their offices for the Visa Information Services Call Center and corresponding reference cards. Other than the information on how to contact the Visa Information Services Call Center, no American Citizen Services employee including at the consular agencies is authorized or trained to handle visa gueries. Instead, those gueries must be directed to the Visa Information Services Call Center or to the Visa Unit at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz as described in the prior paragraph.

For information regarding immigrant visas, please see our website at http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/immigrantvisas
http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/immigrantvisas

HOURS AND RANGE FOR CONSULAR SERVICES AT U.S. CONSULAR AGENCY IN SANTA CRUZ AND COCHABAMBA

Effective October 24, 2005, the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz expanded its public hours. U.S. citizens and others seeking non-visa consular services may come to the U.S. Consular Agency in Santa Cruz Monday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM and 2:00PM to 5:00PM as well as Tuesday through Friday from 9:00AM to 12:30PM, except U.S. and local holidays.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Cochabamba is currently open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to Noon, except U.S. and local holidays. We will advise U.S. citizens and other consular customers through this newsletter of any scheduled changes in those hours.

Please note that the consular agencies provide only certain American Citizen Services, such as receiving applications for passports and consular reports of birth abroad that are then forwarded to the U.S. Embassy in La Paz for adjudication and processing. This includes applications for emergency passports. Consular agencies may receive such applications but are not authorized to approve the applications or issue passports. Instead, all passport applications including emergency ones must be sent to La Paz for processing, adjudication by the consular officer, printing of approved passport applications and return to the consular agency.

For visa information or assistance, please consult our Web site at www.bolivia.usembassy.gov and/or contact the Visa Information Services Call Center described above. If after reviewing the information on our Web site and conferring with the Visa Information Services Call Center you still have specific visa questions, please contact the Visa Unit at consularlapaz@state.gov. Questions concerning American Citizen Services that cannot be answered by the information on the Web site or the consular agencies may be directed to the American Citizen Services Unit at USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com.

RENEWING U.S. DRIVERS LICENSES WHILE OUTSIDE THE U.S.

If you find that your U.S. state drivers license is about to expire and you would like to have it renewed, you should contact the DMV office in the state where your current license was issued. Some states will allow you to renew your license while overseas, others will not.

A good place to start your search for information on this process is http://www.dmv.org. From there you can link to your state's DMV office website which usually posts information on procedures for renewing your license. Although the U.S. Mission has no role in the renewal process, we can notarize certain documents for you if required by your state for renewal. See below for more information on notarial services that we can and cannot provide.

NOTARIAL SERVICES – WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT PROVIDE

We have included the following information in our monthly newsletters since September 2005 and also conveyed this to the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Because we still receive requests from U.S. citizens to legalize/certify/notarize/stamp documents for use in Bolivia and/or for other notarial services that we legally cannot provide, we are repeating this information on notarial services.

In accordance with U.S. law and regulations, the Consular Section may provide certain notarial services in connection with documents to be used in the United States. Documents for use in Bolivia must be processed by Bolivian authorities, even if the documents originate in the U.S. The Consular Section has advised the Bolivian authorities that we accordingly will not certify documents for use other than in the U.S. Therefore, U.S. citizens who wish to present in Bolivia their U.S. birth, marriage, death or other civil documents should have those translated in the U.S. and authenticated by the nearest Bolivian Consul. Similarly, U.S. citizens wishing to marry in Bolivia and who require "certificates of singleness" may query the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry office to clarify how that requirement may be met. Some civil registry offices accept a sworn statement in front of a Bolivian judge. Please contact the relevant Bolivian Civil Registry Office for further details. For more information on notarial services provided by the Consular Section, please check our Web site at http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/consular/ACS.htm. For information on how to authenticate documents in the U.S., please consult the Department of State Office of Authentications Web site, http://www.state.gov/m/a/auth/.

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS

The Department of State has asked all overseas offices to ensure that private U.S. citizens realize the need to make their own contingency plans to respond to a possible influenza pandemic. Such contingency

planning would include obtaining influenza vaccines, which the USG cannot provide for private U.S. citizens and/or their dependents, and making arrangements to "shelter in place" or self-quarantine. For further details, please consult the Avian Influenza Fact Sheet and the related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) published by the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, at http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health 1181.html.

INTERNET EMAIL ADDRESS EXCLUSIVELY FOR AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

In order to facilitate communication with U.S. citizens, we have established an Internet email address exclusively for American Citizen Services. That email is USCit.Services.Bolivia@gmail.com. Please note that "American Citizen Services" does not include visa queries or any matters related to U.S. visas. Visa questions should continue to be sent to consularlapaz@state.gov. Emails received at the American Citizen Services Gmail account that do not clearly concern American Citizen Services may be deleted without a response.

CURRENT TRAVEL INFORMATION

For the most current travel warnings, public announcements, and other travel information published by the Department of State, such as the Consular Information Sheet for Bolivia issued April 4, please go directly to www.travel.state.gov. To receive this information automatically, please register through the Internet-Based Registration System (IBRS) at https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs. More information on IBRS is provided below.

INTERNET-BASED REGISTRATION SYSTEM

U.S. citizens who travel or reside abroad can now register a record of their trip or residence so that the Department of State and/or nearby Embassy or Consulate can communicate with and assist citizens in case of an emergency. Registration is now online, and can be accessed at:

https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs. If you are already registered with us, please re-register online so that we can update our records. Through this secure, online registration system, citizens can register and update their contact information on the Internet at any time. The website also provides citizens with up-to-date travel information customized to their unique itinerary. The data citizens provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by

cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with the U.S. citizen's permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CLOSURES

Please note that the Embassy will be closed on the following official holidays during 2006 and 2007.

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Christmas	December 25	Monday
2007		
New Year's Day***	January 1	Monday
Martin Luther King Day*	January 15	Monday
Washington's Birthday* Carnival**	February 19 February 19 & 20	Monday Monday& Tuesday
Good Friday**	April 6	Friday
Bolivian Labor Day**	May 1	Tuesday
Memorial Day*	May 28	Monday
Corpus Christi**	June 7	Thursday
U.S. Independence Day*	July 4	Wednesday
La Paz Day**	July 16	Monday
Bolivian Independence Day**	August 6	Monday
U.S. Labor Day*	September 3	Monday
Columbus Day*	October 8	Monday
All Saints Day**	November 2	Friday
Veterans Day*	November 12	Monday
Thanksgiving Day*	November 22	Thursday
Christmas Day***	December 25	Tuesday
*U.S. Holiday	**Bolivian Holiday	***U.S. & Bolivian Holidays

OTHER INTERNET ADDRESSES OF INTEREST TO U.S. CITIZENS

- U.S. Federal Government: http://www.firstgov.gov
- U.S. Department of State, Consular Affairs: http://travel.state.gov
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security: http://www.dhs.gov
- U.S. Federal Aviation Administration: http://www.faa.gov
- U.S. Internal Revenue Service: http://www.irs.gov

Social Security Administration: http://www.ssa.gov; SSA Newsletter: www.ssa.gov; SSA Newsletter:

U.S. Selective Service: http://www.sss.gov. Federal Voting Assistance: http://www.fvap.gov

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: http://www.cbp.gov (for information including importation of household pets, animal and plant health inspection, etc)

U.S. Department of Agriculture: http://www.usda.gov (for information on food products, food safety and inspection service).

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